

Introduction to

Library of Congress Demographic Group Terms

In 2013 the Library of Congress began to explore the possibility of developing a controlled vocabulary specific to demographic groups. Terms in the vocabulary would be used to describe the characteristics of two types of entities: the intended audiences of resources and the creators and contributors to resources. This first edition of *Library of Congress Demographic Group Terms* contains the initial 827 authorized terms, which were approved in 2015. Below is a brief history of the development of demographic group terms at the Library of Congress and a description of the characteristics and structure of LCDGT.

HISTORY

A demographic group may be defined as a subset of the general population, and refers to the group's age, gender, occupation, nationality, ethnic background, sexual orientation, etc. Individuals may belong to several demographic groups (e.g., an American who is a librarian; a computer engineer who is also a knitter).

Members of specific demographic groups are frequently the intended audiences of resources. For example, television programs are marketed to particular age groups, textbooks are marketed to students at particular educational levels and/or studying particular disciplines, and self-help books are marketed to a wide variety of groups.

Creators of, and contributors to, resources are also members of demographic groups. Publishers often compile anthologies defined by a particular demographic group, such as a collection of poetry by Canadians or cancer survivors. The creators of individually published resources may also choose to self-identify with one or more demographic groups, such as a musician who refers to himself as an Italian.

Library of Congress Subject Headings (LCSH) has always included headings that describe the audiences of resources and the creators and contributors of resources. Headings often include demographic groups (e.g., **Children's films**; **Landscape painting, Australian**; **Nurses' writings**), but subdivisions are also frequently employed to bring out the characteristics of the audience or the creators and contributors, as in the heading strings **English language—Conversation and phase books (for businesspeople)** and **Emotions—Juvenile literature**, which denote audience, and **English fiction—Welsh authors**, which denotes the characteristics of the creators. While headings of this type contain valuable information, their syntax and format are not always intuitive to users. In addition, most of these types of headings may be used both for resources that are *for* particular audiences, or *by* members of a particular demographic group, and for resources that are *about* those resources. This ambiguity leads to many false hits for users.

The development of *Library of Congress Genre/Form Terms for Library and Archival Materials* (LCGFT) provided an opportunity to consider other ways of providing access to audience and creator/contributor characteristics. When LCGFT is fully implemented, LCSH form headings – including those that include both form and audience, or form and creator/contributor characteristics – will no longer be assigned to resources that are *for* particular audiences, or *by* members of a particular demographic group. Those headings will be reserved for topical resources *about* those resources. Since the demographic characteristics of audiences, creators, and contributors are out of scope for LCGFT,

another method had to be devised for describing those aspects of resources, or vital information would be lost.

A similar situation existed when music terms were being developed for LCGFT. LCSH includes headings that refer to the mediums of performance of musical works (e.g., **Piano music; Concertos (Baritone with string orchestra)**), but just as with the headings that include the demographic groups of the audiences and creators/contributors, headings that include medium of performance will no longer be assigned to resources that *are* music. Since medium of performance is vital information, a new way to describe and search that information had to be found. In 2009, the Library of Congress and the Music Library Association agreed to develop a new vocabulary specific to mediums of performance. The first 800 terms were authorized for the *Library of Congress Medium of Performance Thesaurus for Music* (LCMPT) in 2014.

With that precedent in mind, the Library of Congress consulted with the ALA/CaMMS Subject Analysis Committee to determine whether it would be desirable to develop a separate vocabulary for demographic group terms. The Committee responded in the affirmative, and also provided some initial advice on the scope and structure of *Library of Congress Demographic Group Terms* (LCDGT).

LCDGT is being developed as a pilot, the intent of which is to test the principles guiding the development of the vocabulary, to provide consistent patterns for future development, and to generate discussion within the library community. There is no attempt at comprehensiveness within the pilot vocabulary. Terms that highlight specific areas of concern (e.g., conflict situations; hierarchies) are included in order to provide examples and to form the basis for future development. The first two phases of the pilot were undertaken by specialists within LC's Policy and Standards Division (PSD).

The initial development of the principles on the scope and structure of LCDGT occurred during Phase 1. Those draft principles were published for constituent comment in May 2015 under the title *Library of Congress Demographic Group Terms: Introduction and Guiding Principles of the Pilot*. In the same month, approximately 380 proposals for terms were also published for comment. Phase 1 was completed in June 2015, when 387 terms were approved.

Phase 2 occurred from June 2015 through January 2016. During this phase, specialists in PSD enhanced the breadth and depth of LCDGT by continuing to add terminology based on two sources: LC subject headings, and comments that members of the library community made during the feedback period for Phase 1. Specialists also explored relationships, further tested the guiding principles laid out in the first phase of the pilot, and revised the *Guiding Principles* document (<http://www.loc.gov/catdir/cpsol/lcdgt-principles.pdf>). Four hundred forty additional terms were approved and added to LCDGT in January 2016, and approximately 60 terms that had been approved in the first phase of the pilot were revised at the same time. PSD also published a draft *Demographic Group Terms Manual* in January 2016 and requested constituent comment on it.

Phase 3 of the pilot began in January 2016. This third phase is intended to test LCDGT principles and policies in a production environment. Proposals are now accepted for terms that are needed for new cataloging. All proposals should follow the guidelines and instructions for making proposals that are contained in the draft *Demographic Group Terms Manual*. The proposals will be published and approved according to the standard practice developed for LCSH proposals.

USE WITH THE DEMOGRAPHIC GROUP TERMS MANUAL

LCDGT should be used with the *Demographic Group Terms Manual*, which contains instructions that are essential for those who wish to understand and apply Library of Congress demographic group terms correctly. The instruction sheets comprising the *Manual* may be freely downloaded from LC's web site at <http://www.loc.gov/aba/publications/FreeLCDGT/freelcdgt.html>.

Additional information on each of the topics below may be found in the *Manual*.

CHARACTERISTICS

Library of Congress Demographic Group Terms is a stand-alone vocabulary that may be used in conjunction with any other controlled vocabulary and descriptive cataloging code.

Terms in LCDGT are based on literary warrant (i.e., they are proposed as needed for new cataloging and are based on usage in the resource being cataloged and information found in reference sources). Proposals may be submitted for the demographic group(s) with which a creator or contributor identifies, or for the demographics of the stated or implied audiences of resources.

Authorized terms

Authorized terms in LCDGT are printed in boldface type. The terms are plural and consist of a single demographic group. They may consist of a single word, as in **Farmers** and **Rastafarians**, or a phrase, such as **Ballet dancers** and **Tamil speakers**, and may include a parenthetical qualifier if it is necessary to distinguish between homonyms (e.g., **Georgians (Republic of Georgia)**; **Georgians (State of Georgia)**).

Categories

Each authorized term is assigned to at least one of the categories defined on the Library of Congress' web page at <http://www.loc.gov/standards/valuelist/lcdgt.html>. Each of the categories provides broad collocation for the terms in the category, and serves as the category's "top term." The category or categories into which each term is assigned are printed in italics under the authorized term. *Examples:*

Americans

[national/regional]

Boys

[age]

[gender]

Broader Term (BT) and Narrower Term (NT) references

Broader terms and narrower terms display the hierarchical relationship. Each NT is a member of the class represented by the BT.

Terms are assigned a broader term (BT) only when one group is intrinsically a subset of another, and when the narrower term (NT) is in the same category as the BT. For example, dentists are by definition medical personnel, and both are occupations, so there is a BT/NT relationship between them. Politicians are not always statesmen, and statesmen are not always politicians, however, so there is not a hierarchical relationship between those terms. Terms without a BT are collocated only by the categories to which they are assigned. *Example:*

Dentists

BT Medical personnel

Medical personnel

NT Dentists

Related Term (RT) references

Related terms display the associative relationship; the terms are mentally associated to such a high degree that it is desirable to provide a link between them to indicate that the other term may be of interest to the user. The terms tend to be used somewhat interchangeably or have meanings that overlap to an extent, but the relationship is not hierarchical. *Example:*

African Americans

RT Blacks

Blacks

RT African Americans

Used For (UF) references

Sometimes called “see” references, Used For references display the equivalence relationship. They lead the users from a non-preferred term to the authorized term. Under the authorized term the notation is UF, but a USE reference is generated if the user searches for a non-preferred term.

UF references may refer from a synonym or provide a different form of the authorized term. The latter is most commonly represented with inverted references, which bring significant words to the front. UFs may also refer from formerly authorized forms of the term. UFs are occasionally made from terms that are not strictly synonymous when it is determined to be impractical to establish separate terms for the concepts. In this situation, the UF generally has a slightly narrower meaning than the authorized term and is called an “upward” UF. UFs sometimes include a parenthetical qualifier.

Foreign-language UFs are sometimes made for demonyms, that is, the words that the residents or inhabitants of a place use to refer to themselves. Otherwise, foreign-language UF references are not made for English-language terms unless the foreign word or phrase is typically found in English-language reference sources. *Examples:*

Caricaturists

USE Cartoonists

[Upward reference]

Kids

USE Children

[Synonym]

Students, Art

USE Art students

[Inverted reference to bring a significant word to the front]

Togolais

USE Togolese

[French demonym for residents of Togo]

Scope notes

Scope notes are single-sentence definitions that are intended to help catalogers maintain consistency in the way that the term is assigned, and to help users determine whether the term covers the material that they seek. Scope notes are generally provided when a term may be unfamiliar to most users, or when reference sources disagree on the meaning of a term and the term must therefore be defined for the LCDGT context. *Examples:*

Caregivers

Family or friends who provide personal home care for the elderly, ill, or people with disabilities on an informal voluntary basis.

Teenagers

People in the general age range of thirteen through eighteen years.

Contrasting scope notes may be provided when two or more authorized terms are closely related or overlapping in meaning, or could be confused. One sentence is provided for each term being contrasted, and reciprocal notes are provided for all of the affected terms. *Example:*

Administrative assistants

People employed to perform administrative duties. For people who manage correspondence and routine work for a superior see Secretaries.

Secretaries

People who manage correspondence and routine work for a superior. For people employed to perform administrative duties see Administrative assistants.

PRODUCTS

Four services provide information about new and revised medium of performance terms.

1. **Monthly Lists.** New and changed demographic group terms appear on *LC Subject Headings Monthly Lists*, which are posted on the World Wide Web at <http://www.loc.gov/aba/cataloging/subject/weeklylists>; free subscriptions to the *Monthly Lists*, via e-mail or RSS feed, can be arranged at <http://www.loc.gov/rss>.
2. **Classification Web.** *Library of Congress Demographic Group Terms* is included in *Classification Web*, a fee-based World Wide Web service that also provides access to *Library of Congress Subject Headings*, *Library of Congress Genre/Form Terms for Library and Archival Materials*, *Library of Congress Medium of Performance Thesaurus for Music*, and *Library of Congress Classification*.
3. **LC Linked Data Service.** Medium of performance records are included in the LC Linked Data Service <http://id.loc.gov>, a free-web based service that allows for browsing, display, and bulk download (in various formats) of the authority records.
4. **Free record downloads.** Full MARC 21 authority records in MARC UTF-8 format are freely provided for downloading from <http://classificationweb.net/LCDGT/>. Two files are posted whenever LCDGT is updated. One file is cumulative and consists of all of the records that are valid at the time the file is created (i.e., it is a “snapshot” of the database). The other consists only of the records that have been added, revised, or cancelled since the last time a file was created. The structure of the file names and information about downloading the files is provided at <http://classificationweb.net/LCDGT/>.

CONTACT

Questions and comments may be sent to:

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